

He Made Things by twowritehands

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Summary:

A Hop-centric bit of happily ever after fluff. Post series.

He Made Things

Hopper made a lot of things. Mostly he made friends. He made jokes. He taught himself guitar and made music. He met a girl and made love. Lost the girl and made war. Met another girl and made wedding vows. Then he made Sara and he couldn't be prouder. This was the coolest kid ever. So smart, and it wasn't just him, all the nurses and doctors praised her sharp mind and burning curiosity. When he lost her he made war again only this time against nature itself, God, whatever you want to call it. His life fell to pieces and he made excuses.

Then he made damn sure another parent didn't have to suffer a loss and that made all the difference. He made friends again with the boys and the dog. He made music again, on weekend nights with Joyce smoking quietly beside him as he plucked out favorite tunes. He made love again with Joyce tucked in warm beside him every night. Little by little he made amends.

Joyce and Hop's schedules lined up close enough that Hop dropped her off at work on his way into the station and picked her up on his way home. Nights like this were special so neither of the boys were allowed to make plans. They went out to eat together as a family.

Hop rolled the Jeep up to the curb outside of the general store. Joyce was propped against the counter inside, talking, but hurried out to him with a big relieved smile. Hop gulped and licked his lips; she was just too cute sometimes.

"Hey, darlin'," he lilted, lips smacking off hers as he put the Jeep in gear and pulled back into traffic. She brushed her neatly trimmed hair out of her face. "Take a right; we need to pick Will up from the Arcade. Jonathan is going to meet us at the restaurant."

They went over their day as he cut across town to the arcade next to the laundromat he used to use. Out on the curb, a young couple stood next to a large laundry basket full of writhing fur balls.

"Heeeey," Hop said, pointing at the handwritten sign. "Let's get a

puppy."

Joyce snorted. "No way. After Rex I swore never again." She shook her head, voice dark with the rotten memories. "Potty training something that won't even wear a diaper. Babies are more worth the effort."

As soon as she said it her involuntary smile froze, she inhaled, rolled her lips, and glanced at him.

Hop dropped his hand from the key, leaving it in the ignition. His eyes climbed slowly up her body from her belly to her eyes. But before he could speak, she gave him a queasy smile and lept from the Jeep.

"Christ, Joyce," he muttered affectionately, following her into the Arcade.

Will and his friends were huddled around a PacMan machine. Fortunately it wasn't him at the center of the glory so it was fairly easy to peel him away. Hop steered him by a shoulder, "c'mon, son, time for all you can eat buffet.."

The thirteen year old could put away a lot but you wouldn't know it for his slender frame. The energy was converted directly to height, as he had started growing at an alarming rate. These days, he met Hop at the chin and was only an inch or so from besting Jonathan.

Memory of when this kid was elbow height nearly made Hop trip. Damn, was that only a year ago? Well, it had been fall. So more like eighteen months. But damn, it felt like yesterday.

They got a booth and Jonathan joined them quickly, still in the Burger King get up, and as joyful as his mother to finally be off his feet and away from customers. Not much for customer service those two, but, hey, they could fool most.

Hop kept a close eye on Joyce through dinner as they prompted the boys to talk about their lives in detail. Jonathan had taken some photographs that he was excited to see turn out. Will had decided to

start a comic book and mentioned the mysterious Eleven whom he regrettably met only the once in his upside down fort.

Hop's mind shot like a rubber band into the dark forest and the drop box. He glanced at Joyce who patted his knee. She knew how badly he wished he could catch that girl and bring her home into their safe warm house. Joyce wanted it just as badly. But Ele believed she belonged on the other side, and so long as she took what he put in the box, he had to believe she was okay.

Heart twisting for the girl, he lost the majority of his appetite but kept eating so that ever observant Jonathan wouldn't catch on. It was hard enough keeping him out of the investigations into the monster sightings around town. Him and that Wheeler girl both.

After dinner, Will wanted to ride home with Jonathan so Hop and Joyce were alone together again. Now they had both thought about the No Puppy thing and that was why Joyce turned on the radio and started talking about the DJ as if any of it mattered.

Hop turned the radio off. "Joyce," he said seriously, looking away from the road briefly to meet her big brown eyes. "I was thinking...."

She sat with her back to the door, eyes widened, breath stilled. He slowed down so that he could look at her again, and smiled. "What did you say after Will?"

"What did I say?"

"When you had him? Did you swear off any more babies too?"

"Well--what did you say after Sara...?"

His jaw set forward and he pushed his shoulders back into the seat. "I was a wreck then. Things are different now. The boys have proven that she won't ever stop being my little angel, no matter how many children I end up with."

Joyce smiled, watery eyed. "I loved having Jonathan and Will and I wanted more, just--not with Lonnie," her voice darkened and she

shook her head again but then she laughed and dabbed at an eye. The way she could still look so bashful killed Hop every time. Those big eyes of hers. "I've thought about it, okay?"

He pulled into the driveway and shut off the engine. Jonathan's car was already there, lights on in the house. Hop pulled Joyce across the bench seat to him and gave her a kiss. "Hm?"

She trembled and kissed him back. "One," she gasped softly. "One more. That's it, Hop. Just one."

They worked at it through the rest of the long hot summer. Nothing urgent. More like they just stopped buying birth control. They had sex so frequently anyway there wasn't any way to increase the routine unless they started doing quickies at lunch which was just impractical given her sparse thirty minute window.

The Pill would have had JUST enough time to fully leave her system when sunny side up eggs turned against Joyce for the first time in fourteen years. She took a test. Positive. She didn't know how to tell him. He guessed it when he saw her eyes. One look and his heart ballooned bigger than his body. "Yeah?"

"Yeah."

He gasped softly, grabbed her by the face, and kissed her. "I love you so damn much."

When they got the news, the boys laughed, in shock, and then became extremely excited. Baby names already.

Hop made a list as long as his arm and they each crossed a name off whenever they thought of a good reason not to name a kid that. He made a crib. And then he had to make another one because the doctors confirmed it: he had made twins.

So he made an add-on to the house so that everyone would fit. He made a call and spoke to his ex wife. She was thrilled that he'd made a new life, and a good one. He made his adoption of the boys legal, and they happily practiced signing their new last name. He made a

sign for the porch that said Welcome to the Hopper Family Home.